

RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF SPECIAL NEEDS  
SCHOOL SUPPORT SYSTEM

**SOUTH SHORE SCHOOL**

FEBRUARY - MARCH 2001

# SCHOOL SUPPORT SYSTEM

## Introduction

The purpose of the School Support System (SSS) is to provide a means of accountability for delivery of programs and services for students with disabilities. The SSS model is designed to promote the involvement of the private school (or state agency) special educators and parents. It is designed to learn if the private school (or state agency) meets the minimum regulations and what effects the programs and services have on student performances. Finally, the SSS develops a support plan for training and technical assistance.

To accomplish this, the SSS includes these components:

- ♦ The Orientation Meeting The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) staff meets with the Private Special Education School (or State Agency) representatives to plan the site visit and identify issues or initiatives that may influence programs or service delivery.
- ♦ Data Analysis Meeting The RIDE staff meets to review demographic information on selected reports including: Private (or State Agency) Special Education School Application for Approval, census information, and information collected through record review, staff questionnaires and parent interviews. To ensure that the child is at the center of the study, all analyses begin with the child. Thus, a sample of approximately 5 to 10 percent of students with disabilities is selected; the records of these students are reviewed; their parents, teachers and related service providers are interviewed; and their classrooms are observed. The result is an in-depth, unified examination of the actual provision of programs and services for students with disabilities. The RIDE staff compiles a preliminary summary of their analyses of these data.
- ♦ Presentation by the Private (or State Agency) Special Education School and School Site Visit The site visit begins with a presentation of programs by staff. The presentation provides the visiting team with general and specific information on delivery of programs and services to students. Following this presentation, visits to the school are made. The team members interview school administrators and teaching staff. The team gathers sufficient information and works with the Private (or State Agency) Special Education School personnel to generate a report covering the following:
  - The school's (or state agency's) compliance with the state and federal regulations, relative to the education of students with disabilities.
  - The quality and effectiveness of programs and services provided by the school (or state agency).
  - The need for professional development and technical assistance that will enable the school (or state agency) to improve programs and services.

- ♦ The Support Plan The RIDE team and the Private (or State Agency) Special Education School administrator(s) meet to review the data and complete a report of results. The group designs a support plan with timelines for implementation. This plan enables the school (or state agency) to correct areas of non-compliance and to strengthen promising programs and correct areas of weakness in order to improve services and programs for all students.
- ♦ The SSS Report The report summarizes the findings from the various data sources. The format of the report uses four divisions: indicators, findings, documentation and support plan. Indicators either describe performance or compliance. Findings can include a variety of some fifteen categories, from school improvement to the least restrictive environment. The documentation section of the report distinguishes the source of the finding. The support plan reflects the response to the described findings. The support plan describes the corrective action required by the school (or state agency) as well as that RIDE will assist the school (or state agency) to improve programs and services.

## SOUTH SHORE SCHOOL

### SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

INDICATORS	FINDINGS	DOCUMENTATION	SUPPORT PLAN
Performance	South Shore School staff exhibit strong commitment and teamwork. Teachers, teacher assistants, and social workers appear to work closely and consult readily on a daily basis	Observation Staff Interviews Presentation	
Performance	South Shore School does not appear to have a distinct educational budget within the South Shore Mental Health Center. The Special Education Director has been able to update and rationalize salary schedules providing more realistic and equitable remuneration. New school books and supplies appear in quantity.	Observation Staff Interviews Presentation	The School Support Team recommends South Shore Mental Health Center, require a distinct and annually submitted educational budget prepared by the school's special education director.

## SOUTH SHORE SCHOOL

### GOOD TEACHING PRACTICES

INDICATORS	FINDINGS	DOCUMENTATION	SUPPORT PLAN
Performance	Classroom rules are posted prominently. Store Rules are posted prominently. These are readily accessible and usable for students and staff.	Observation	
Performance	<p>South Shore School faculty use a variety of academic approaches including thematic cross-disciplinary subjects and language, reading, and writing skills.</p> <p>South Shore School attempts to track its student resident school district educational course content as well as instructional patterns so there is a closer link to transitioning. School Support Team observed brand new texts throughout the school. Nevertheless, the School Support Team recommends South Shore School develop its own general curriculum. IEPs that are initiated and/or revised with a general curriculum, will, in turn, require special education instruction be based on adequate knowledge about that curriculum's scope and sequence. This approach provides a more realistic, life context for learning, transition, and staff development.</p>	<p>Presentation</p> <p>Staff Interviews</p> <p>Staff Surveys</p> <p>Observation</p>	<p>South Shore School should consider dual private school approval. This would elevate developing a general curriculum before a separate "functional" curriculum. It would permit more than one type of special education class model (e.g. resource). It would permit using specialists who do not require special education certification (e.g. art, music, even other administrators). It would also provide flexibility allowing tailoring learning experiences for those student found eligible under the provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.</p>
Performance	South Shore School uses offsite facilities (Guild, YMCA, and Soldiers Field) for physical education instruction, including swimming, weight lifting, and soccer.	<p>Presentation</p> <p>Staff Interviews</p>	
Performance	<p>South Shore School teacher assistants work with students on both academic and behavior management goals and objectives. Assistants help with academic assignments as well as provide out of classroom supervision during disruptive and inappropriate behavioral incidents.</p> <p>Teacher assistants attend IEP meetings and appear knowledgeable and familiar with both educational and behavioral goals and objectives. Teacher assistants also assist school bus transportation on loading and unloading.</p>	<p>Staff Interviews</p> <p>Documentation</p> <p>Staff Surveys</p> <p>Observation</p>	

## SOUTH SHORE SCHOOL

### GOOD TEACHING PRACTICES (cont.)

INDICATORS	FINDINGS	DOCUMENTATION	SUPPORT PLAN
Performance	South Shore School special education and related services staff meet as a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) every week to share ideas, concerns, specific cases and strategies for students.	Staff Interviews  Presentation	
Performance	South Shore School should continue to add computers to classrooms, instructional software, printers, and supervised Internet connection. In turn, this needs to be linked with staff training.	Observation  Staff Interviews	See Professional Development Section.

## SOUTH SHORE SCHOOL

### FREE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC EDUCATION (FAPE)

INDICATORS	FINDINGS	DOCUMENTATION	SUPPORT PLAN
Performance	<p>South Shore School provides a highly structured, predictable and stable behavioral management system. The school utilizes positive practice behavioral change strategies that provides a coherent/rational basis for clinical treatment, school discipline, and academic progress. The intent of the structured behavioral change strategies are to provide students and staff objective and tangible feedback while promoting appropriate behavior in the context of school, community, and home environments. South Shore School approaches behavioral crisis and incidents as an educational/teaching opportunity. South Shore School uses/manipulates incidents, events, emotions, actions, and environmental factors to promote recognition of behavioral responses and resulting outcomes.</p> <p>South Shore School provides a incentive strategy with corresponding disciplinary responses. Each student is provided a broad range of privileges within the program and community. The school uses a level system. Levels are determined for each student based on their behavioral performance within a self-control tracking system. South Shore School staff chart the time each student spends within each level. Movement within the level system is based on individual student actions not those of a group.</p>	<p>Presentation</p> <p>Observation</p> <p>Staff Interviews</p> <p>Document Review</p> <p>Record Review</p>	
Performance	<p>South Shore School uses a wide range of incentives for student successes. The primary incentive system provides opportunities for students to earn money. The system requires students learn and practice money management strategies and maintain an accurate account of money earned and/or spent. Each student in Levels II-IV start the day with \$.90 available at the end of the day. Students can access their accounts by writing a check. An additional amount can be earned at the end of the week for significant accomplishments within the program for that week. Student's earnings can be saved or spent on items which they have had influence on selecting. Individual protocols for community based purchasing can be established in conjunction with parents/guardians.</p> <p>South Shore School uses contracting as a way to target specific areas where students may be challenged. They may be used by teachers as a series of small contracts within the classroom. They must be mutually agreed upon and clear-cut.</p> <p>South Shore School uses a gradation of verbal intervention, assist students to identify interfering actions and develop alternative strategies to self control credits, contingent removal from classroom setting and/or activity pull outs, including identifying interfering action, conducting life space interviews, and developing plans for students to resume scheduled activities</p>	<p>Presentation</p> <p>Observation</p> <p>Staff Interviews</p> <p>Document Review</p> <p>Record Review</p>	

## SOUTH SHORE SCHOOL

### FREE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC EDUCATION (FAPE) (cont.)

INDICATORS	FINDINGS	DOCUMENTATION	SUPPORT PLAN
Performance	South Shore School uses in school suspension for significant disruptions/unsafe actions. Students drop to a Level I. This process allows students to let off steam then begin toward resuming activities which earn credits and privileges. Time out areas are easily accessible, appear safe and in areas that reduce stimulation and provide space and options to calm down and reconsider behavioral choices and options. Time outs are always directly supervised by staff. South Shore School staff follow and record detailed records of interfering actions, in house suspensions, inappropriate oral communications, etc.	Presentation  Observation  Staff Interviews  Document Review  Record Review	
Performance	South Shore School's increased emphasis on educational programming appears to have contributed to reducing behavioral outbursts.	Presentation  Staff Interviews  Observation	



**SOUTH SHORE SCHOOL****FAPE - EVALUATION**

<b>INDICATORS</b>	<b>FINDINGS</b>	<b>DOCUMENTATION</b>	<b>SUPPORT PLAN</b>
Performance/ Compliance	South Shore School receives referrals from school districts which do not have current assessments.	Staff Interviews  Record Review (BIE 1, 3, and 4)	South Shore School will provide RIDE with a form letter and telephone log system which communicate explicitly to referring school districts the need to provide updated assessments before placement at South Shore School. This letter and telephone log system narratives will be forwarded to RIDE with the submission of the 2001-2002 School Approval Amendments.
Performance	South Shore School will conduct 3-year re-evaluations if resident school districts are not responsive.	Staff Interviews	South Shore School may want to include this information as part of tuition rate narrative forwarded to school districts.

**SOUTH SHORE SCHOOL****LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (LRE)**

<b>INDICATORS</b>	<b>FINDINGS</b>	<b>DOCUMENTATION</b>	<b>SUPPORT PLAN</b>
Performance	South Shore School students interact with non-disabled students at recreational activities, athletic teams, school trips, and dances. South Shore School students walk to nearby Guild Playground and Old Mountain Field and use community libraries, YMCA and bowling alley. The school includes as part of its instructional approach, regular visits/shopping at local businesses. Field trips are part of the curriculum and promote further contact and integration with non-disabled students.	Document Review  Staff Interviews  Observation	

**SOUTH SHORE SCHOOL**

**FAPE - PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS**

INDICATORS	FINDINGS	DOCUMENTATION	SUPPORT PLAN
Performance/ Compliance	Based on analysis of the complaint/mediation/and hearing system within the last three years, South Shore School appears to resolve the majority of issues at the school level.	RIDE Complaint Management and Hearing Systems  Parent Interviews	

## SOUTH SHORE SCHOOL

### FACILITIES

INDICATORS	FINDINGS	DOCUMENTATION	SUPPORT PLAN
Performance	<p>South Shore School classrooms, offices, and lunch/break rooms are located on the second floor of a shopping center, 730 Kingstown Road, Wakefield, [South Kingstown] Rhode Island. Further classroom and administrative office reallocations and expansion were being made during the School Support System (Monitoring) process. The building is in substantial compliance with the access provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act and State Building Code.</p> <p>Some classrooms appear cramped. This site and room configurations do not lend themselves to expanding the variety of educational program offerings, particularly for secondary level students. Classroom maneuverability appears delimited for those students who have underlying attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and require more space. The current site capacity is approximately 42 full-time students. As of March 14, 2001, 35 students were enrolled and a waiting list exists. The School Support Team was informed that long range goals include designing and building a new school site.</p>	<p>On-site observation</p> <p>Presentation</p> <p>Staff Interviews</p> <p>On-site observation</p> <p>Presentation</p> <p>Staff Interviews</p>	<p>South Shore School's mission of special education to students at risk for more remote and restrictive placements or those returning from such placements is jeopardized by continuing at the current site. The School Support Team strongly recommends expediting the removal and relocation to a new and state of the art <u>school</u> (our emphasis) site.</p>

## SOUTH SHORE SCHOOL

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

INDICATORS	FINDINGS	DOCUMENTATION	SUPPORT PLAN
Performance	<p>South Shore School as an arm of South Shore Mental Health Center, provides and requires staff to attend inservice training. Staff development activities are routinely scheduled for times when school and related services are not in session. Prior to the school year, staff receive a four (4) day introduction and inservice covering agency wide priorities. These include: medical, documentation, family relations, behavior management, mental health, client care crisis intervention and emergency management, and education. South Shore School staff indicated desire for more professional development geared to improving student achievement. New staff are receiving IEP training. This training can/should be expanded to improve IEP consistency, progress reporting, and the blending in of behavioral management goals and objectives.</p>	<p>Documentation</p> <p>Staff Surveys</p> <p>Staff Interviews</p>	<p>Staff may benefit from additional computer software and word processing skills. Students with attention deficits/hyperactivity, writing, research, and attention span skills, tend to improve with computers. South Shore School should add computers along with course content revision and skill development (e.g., reading skills, mathematics, science, social studies), interdisciplinary and thematic instruction for teachers and teacher assistants. (See Professional Development Calendar, 2001 Spring and Summer Update for technology training.)</p>

## SOUTH SHORE SCHOOL

### PARENT PARTICIPATION

INDICATORS	FINDINGS	DOCUMENTATION	SUPPORT PLAN
Performance	<p>South Shore School works in partnership with parents and referring school districts. There appears to be a high degree of parent satisfaction with South Shore School communication, support and demonstrable student performance improvements. Particular note should be made of teachers, social worker, special education director and administrative assistant who communicate daily with parents explaining students progress and problems. Staff have made themselves available for after regular work hours communication and assistance to parents. South Shore School teaching staff send notes home each day with daily progress noted.</p>	<p>Parent Interviews</p> <p>On-site Observation</p> <p>Staff Interviews</p>	<p>It is recommended that South Shore School consider adding a school newsletter, which can include student driven topics and writing. The newsletter can also include parent/family counseling-training topics (e.g., coping with anger and helping to further implement IEP objectives). The South Shore School should consider developing follow-up satisfaction surveys. This can guide school staff regarding what service components may need refinements and/or require improved communications.</p>
Performance	<p>South Shore School's Director, Child/Adolescent &amp; Family Services indicated that the school has a goal to start in-service training for parents.</p>	<p>Presentation</p> <p>Staff Interviews</p>	<p>South Shore School should consider contacting other similarly situated providers, such as the Viola M. Berard School (Northern Rhode Island Community Services and the Providence Center Community Mental Health) for advice.</p>